

XIV. *An Account of a Fish from Batavia, called Jaculator: In a Letter to Mr. Peter Collinson, F. R. S. from John Albert Schloffer, M. D. F. R. S.*

Dear Sir,

Amsterdam, 22d Feb. 1763.

Read March 15,
1764.

HAVING lately received from Mr. Hommel, governor of the hospital at Batavia, many uncommon fishes, well preserved, amongst them is one as curious for it's shape, as for it's extraordinary manner of obtaining it's food. It is new to me, and, I believe, hath never been observed by any writer on natural history. [Vide TAB. X.]

I request the favour, that you will present this rare fish to the Royal Society, as a small, but sincere proof of the gratitude and esteem, which I really have for that respectable, learned body.

Governor Hommel gives the following account of the Jaculator or shooting fish, a name alluding to it's nature. It frequents the shores and sides of the sea and rivers, in search of food. When it spies a fly sitting on the plants, that grow in shallow water, it swims on to the distance of four, five, or six feet, and then, with a surprizing dexterity, it ejects out of it's tubular-mouth a single drop of water, which never fails striking the fly into the sea, where it soon becomes it's prey.

VOL. LIV.

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The relation of this uncommon action of this cunning fish raised the governor's curiosity ; though it came well attested, yet he was determined, if possible, to be convinced of the truth, by ocular demonstration.

For that purpose, he ordered a large wide tun to be filled with sea-water ; then had some of these fish caught, and put into it, which was changed every other day. In a while, they seemed reconciled to their confinement ; then he determined to try the experiment.

A slender stick, with a fly pinned on at it's end, was placed in such a direction, on the side of the vessel, as the fish could strike it.

It was with inexpressible delight, that he daily saw these fish exercising their skill in shooting at the fly, with an amazing velocity, and never missed the mark.

In looking over that noble work of the Museum of the king of Sweden, printed anno 1754, I met with this *Jaculator*, well engraven, and described, by the learned Baron Linnæus, under the title of *Chætodon*, pag. 61, plate 33.

Baron Linnæus's Description.

Acanthopterygii-chætodon.

Chætodon rostratum, pinna dorsali postice macula fusca.

Corpus ovatum, compressum ; fascia grisea perpendicularis fecat caput per oculos. Fascia grisea perpendicularis ab initio pinnæ dorsalis descendit ante pectorales ad ventrales. Fascia grisea perpendicularis in

medio pisce. Fascia fusca saturatior cingit caudam ante radios. Macula fusca orbicularis in medio pinnæ dorsalis ubi mutica.

Caput rostro elongato, fere ut in syngnathis, dentes in maxillis minimi. Narium foramina utrinque 2 ante oculos, membranæ branchiostegæ officula 5. Opercula branchiarum squamis tectæ, ut in reliquis congeneribus. Pinnæ dorfi et ani æquales, valde transversæ, et lateribus squamis tectæ. Dorsalis radiis 9-31 primoribus mucronatis, posterioribus 31 mollibus, longioribus. Pectorales radiis 14. Ventrals radiis 6 mollibus, excepto primo spinoso; eorum secundus reliquis longior. Ani radiis 3-20 posterioribus 20 longioribus, mollibus; primis 3 spinosis, caudæ radiis 14, æqualibus; parva

Accedit proxime ad LABRUM rostro reflexo fasciis lateralibus tribus fuscis, Amœn. Acad. 1. p. 313.

XIV. *An Account of the Polish Cochineal :
In a Letter to Mr. Henry Baker, F.R.S.
from Dr. Wolfe, of Warsaw.*

Warsaw, April 4, 1763.

Read March 29,
1764.

COCCI Polonici sunt ova, vel potius pupæ insecti nondum satis cogniti, quæ ad radices variarum plantarum adhærent, et versus finem Julii ab evulsis radicibus ope cultri abraduntur et colliguntur. Plantæ illæ sunt valde variæ, nec quotannis in una eademque specie reperiuntur

